



Joint House and Senate Priorities Hearing  
November 16, 2016  
MCCC Testimony - Final

Thank you and good evening.

I am Gigi Godwin, President and CEO of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Let me first say thank you for your support of Marriott International's decision to stay in Montgomery County. That is a big win for us all. Second, like many here tonight, we continue to support capital funding requests for education (specifically Montgomery College, USG and MCPS) and vital transportation projects like the CCT and the completion of the multi-modal study for I-270.

The MCCC mission is to advocate, educate and create the relationships that help all our employers - the small, mid-tier, and large companies, and nonprofits - to thrive in our regional, national and global economy which is a global economic ecosystem.

That's why we engage at the Federal, state and county level where we focus our efforts on:

- Economic Competitiveness;
- Infrastructure; and
- Shaping the Marketplace by promoting access to opportunity.

Working together we must get these right in order for our employers to solve their biggest problem, the one that keeps my CEO's awake at night:

- **The Attraction and Retention of the Next Generation of Top Talent.**

We are located in, and surrounded by, a competitive global knowledge economy.

And talent is the raw material of success.

"Talent" is: the computer scientists, the researchers, the engineers, and the entrepreneurs and more! The bright, energetic, and diverse minds that produce solutions to the world's challenges.

When our employers have trouble attracting and retaining talent, our State and County miss out on benefitting from the energy and magnetic force of this talent pool not to mention their contributions as taxpaying residents and business owners.

What are the barriers to securing the top talent that is so essential to success?

- Uncompetitive personal income tax rate that is not regionally competitive;
- Congestion on our roads and the unreliability of the Metro system;
- An inadequate supply of housing that is within their reach; and
- Not enough companies that locate and expand here to create the necessary ladders of opportunity for lifelong professional growth for young professionals and their peers.

For these reasons, we ask that in the upcoming session as you consider legislation you think about the impact on our businesses ability to thrive in our economic ecosystem, and that you work to support employers' ability to be relevant and competitive to create ongoing opportunities. It's about jobs in our community.

For example,

**1) Economic Competitiveness**

**One State=One Law**

**Earned Sick and Safe Leave at the State Level must be applied to all jurisdictions equally.**

**2) Strategic Investment in Infrastructure**

**Transportation**

**Focus on core projects including CCT, I-270, Purple Line and WMATA.**

**3) Shaping the Market**

**Procurement and streamlining regulations**

**We are working on a proposal to make it easier for Veteran Owned Businesses to qualify for State procurement.**

A more detailed legislative agenda is attached.

Maryland may be geographically small but we continue to make a big impact, especially as it relates to our talent pool that works to identify solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges like exploring the outer reaches of the universe and developing personalized therapies to beat cancer.

Important things are happening right her in our community. We are making history and changing the world for the better, right here in our community. Our businesses are doing amazing things in bio sciences, health IT, cyber, hospitality, construction and greening our economy.

We have a diverse and skilled talent pool today that we must work every day to retain as well as grow. We must support business growth because it translates directly into more jobs for today and tomorrow.

We, as tax payers and residents of this amazing county and state, look forward to working with you to make sure that Montgomery County and Maryland businesses have what they need to continue to attract and retain the raw material of success: the next generation of top talent.

Thank you.